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NEWSMAN'S OBJECTIVITY STRAINED

Confusion Hurt Cuban Invasion

By PAUL R. RYAN
Patriot Ledger Staff Writer

The "fish" are no longer running in the Bay of Pigs. A year ago at this time they were. And a Cuban fisherman, testing a Marxist line, came up with quite a haul.

Call To Arms

This was Fidel Castro. His haul consisted of 1,179 Cuban patriots. A few "fish" got away. Others died on the beach along Cuba's southern coast. All were caught in a high tide of political emotion.

The Cuban patriots who opposed Castro started their unsuccessful invasion of a year ago by broadcasting coded messages to underground movements in Havana. The messages, repeated and repeated, said simply, "the fish are running, the fish are running."

This was to alert counter-revolutionary elements that the invasion was coming. It also was a call to arms never answered. The sign of the fish is the symbol of Christianity and has its origin in the Bible.

Today, most of the 1,179 survivors of the Bay of Pigs invasion are for sale in Havana's high-priced prisoner market. Castro wants 62 million dollars for his catch. Families in exile have only an estimated 28 million dollars to barter.

The dynamics of the revolution and counter-revolution has put a good many questions of a moral, political and ideological nature to the Western Hemisphere. The answers will be written by subsequent history.

This writer interviewed hundreds of Cuban exiles and Castro sympathizers before last year's invasion attempt. As a Caribbean newsman based in San Juan, Puerto Rico, it was easy in those days to become involved, something a journalist should never do, with a side and a cause.

Invasion Buildup

Most of the Cubans I knew before the invasion belonged to the Revolutionary Movement of the People headed by Manolo Ray an engineer who had worked with Castro during the early days of the Cuban

buildup of the invasion to break the day of the attack.

The newspaper's executives said I was crazy. There couldn't possibly be an attack. An underground leader had told me I might accompany him to Miami and thence to Guatemala to join the invasion force and cover the landings first-hand. I asked for plane tickets and expenses. The answer was no.

Rumors of the invasion were so numerous that it was an easy matter to discount my appeal.

A Talk With Dulles

The morning of the invasion, I had an assignment to cover the Young Presidents convention being held at the La Concha Hotel in San Juan. Allen Dulles, then chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, was guest speaker.

My interview with Mr. Dulles, a fidgety, pipe-stuffing affair, was early in the morning. I had forgotten that the day was the date exiles had given me for the invasion.

It therefore seemed strange to me that every few minutes Mr. Dulles would interrupt me to ask if I had called my paper and had I heard any interesting news bulletins. While we were talking, the invasion he had helped plan was taking place.

It was not till mid-morning that I heard news of the invasion and started kicking myself. I hurried back to see Mr. Dulles and stood six deep in newsmen to get his comments on the invasion. A scoop had slipped through my fingers.

Detained By CIA

Well, the invasion ended. The counter-revolutionary odyssey lasted 72 hours. Ray, along with several other Cuban exile leaders, was detained during the critical pre-invasion hours by the Central Intelligence Agency. Regarded as a non-Communist, Castro, Ray never had a chance to notify his followers inside Cuba of the exact time and place of the invasion.

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The indispensable source was Puerto Rico's Gov. Luis Munoz Marin and I was given the story by Paul P. Kennedy of The New York Times, whom I knew from Mexico and who had broken the first stories of Cubans training in Guatemala for an invasion of Cuba. At the time, The Times had been reluctant to print Kennedy's story as it was based mostly on observation of heavy aircraft activity from outside the Marine base, which was enforcing strict security measures.

My contribution to the story was to call Governor Munoz to ask if the State Department in Washington had notified him in reference to the abnormal amount of military air traffic in the area. He confirmed Kennedy's story.

The defeat of the invasion attempt virtually killed the counter-revolutionary movement within Cuba. Today, underground resistance to totalitarianism within Cuba remains demoralized. Cuban exile movements have little of their old counter-revolutionary fever.